

Nadler Fights to Get Pay for Pensioners from Former Soviet Union

Thursday, 28 April 2011

NEW YORK, NY - Today, Congressman Jerrold Nadler urged Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to continue to pursue agreements between the United States and Russia -- and other states of the former Soviet Union (FSU) -- that would ensure that Russia and other FSU states repay Soviet-era pensions to émigrés now living in the United States.

Nadler's letter comes on the heels of the reported recent announcement of an impending agreement between Russia and Israel that would allow émigrés from the former Soviet Union living in Israel to receive their pensions.

"It is important that the thousands of FSU immigrants in the United States can begin to receive the hard-earned pensions that were denied to them after they worked all their lives in Soviet industries," wrote Nadler. "It is our firm belief that immigrants from the former Soviet Union in the United States should be able to collect pension payments that have been earned through years of work, whether during the Soviet or the post-Soviet eras."

The full text of the letter follows:

April 28, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton

Secretary of State

United States Department of State

2201 C Street, NW

Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

As the elected official representing the largest concentration of émigrés from the former Soviet Union in the United States, I am writing with respect to the report in Haaretz on April 18th announcing the Russian government's intent to pay Soviet pensions to émigrés from the former Soviet Union who now live in Israel.

It is my understanding from the report that Russia and Israel have agreed in principle that Russia will begin paying working pensions to immigrants who left Russia for Israel before 1993. These countries are still working out the details. I urge the State Department to continue to pursue a similar bilateral agreement between Russia and the United States, as well as with other nations of the former Soviet Union (FSU). It is important that the thousands of FSU immigrants in the United States can begin to receive the hard-earned pensions that were denied to them after they worked all their lives in Soviet industries. Millions of émigrés had no choice but to flee oppression in the Soviet Union in the 1970s, '80s and '90s. Many of them were Jews who were forced to renounce their citizenship - and the rights of citizenship - in order to leave.

While the United States has bilateral agreements or arrangements with dozens of nations which address cross-country government pension coverage, we have no such arrangement with Russia or most of the other countries of the former Soviet Union. In June 2009, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved my amendment to H.R. 2410, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, calling on the United States government to continue working with FSU states to facilitate the payment of pensions earned by FSU émigrés now living in the United States. I would like to thank the Department of State for its hard work toward this goal thus far, and emphasize, once again, the importance of continuing to work with FSU governments to help the tens of thousands of elderly retirees get back what is owed to them.

Any agreement entered into between Russia and the United States should provide for retroactive as well as future pension payments and cover all émigrés who earned pensions, including those who have become naturalized U.S. citizens and those who forfeited their citizenship under duress. It is our firm belief that immigrants from the former Soviet Union in the United States should be able to collect pension payments that have been earned through years of work, whether during the Soviet or the post-Soviet eras. We appreciate your past cooperation in working toward this goal and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

JERROLD NADLER

Member of Congress

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